

REMARKS

1. Office Action Summary

Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 15-23 are pending. Claims 15, 17 and 21 are independent claims. In the Office Action dated May 28, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 15-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Perlov et al. (U.S. 6,086,457) in view of Togawa et al. (U.S. 6,413,154).

2. Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 15-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Perlov et al. in view of Togawa et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Perlov et al. discloses a polishing apparatus that includes multiple polishing stations. A slurry dispenser allows a variety of slurries to be supplied to the various polishing stations. Togawa et al. discloses a polishing system that includes multiple polishing apparatuses. A single polishing solution made up of a diluted stock solution is supplied from a mixing tank to the various polishing apparatuses in order to polish wafers.

Claims 15, 17 and 21

In rejecting these claims, the Examiner acknowledged that Perlov is “silent about which slurry suppliers is supplying oxidizer-free medium and which slurry supplier is supplying oxidizing medium.” (Office Action dated May 28, 2003, paper no. 11). With respect to Togawa, Applicants note that a single polishing solution is supplied from a mixing tank to various polishing apparatuses to polish wafers. Togawa contains no teaching or suggestion regarding the use of multiple polishing solutions. Although the Examiner states that it would have been obvious to have modified Perlov with the teaching of employing different stock solutions with oxidizing or oxidizer-free liquid as taught by Togawa, Togawa is silent regarding the use of more than one stock solution. Furthermore, by the Examiner’s own admission, Perlov is silent regarding the types of stock solutions utilized.

Thus, both Perlov and Togawa are silent regarding the use of both an oxidizer-free and oxidizing medium, as is claimed in claims 15, 17 and 21. Thus, if Perlov and Togawa were combined, the elements of the Applicants' claims that disclose the use of oxidizer-free and oxidizing mediums would be lacking.

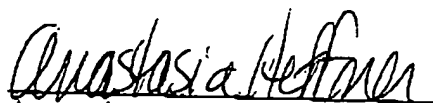
Because these elements of the Applicants' claim are not disclosed in the prior art, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 15, 17 and 21 distinguish over the prior art and that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been overcome. Reconsideration is requested.

Claim 16 is dependent from claim 15 and therefore its allowability directly follows from claim 15. Claims 18-20 are dependent from claim 17 and therefore their allowability directly follows from claim 17. Because claims 22 and 23 are dependent from claim 21, their allowability directly follows from claim 21.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, Applicants respectfully submit pending claims 15-23 are allowable in their present form, and hereby request allowance of claims 15-23. If any questions arise or issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below in order to expedite disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Anastasia Heffner
Registration No. 47,638
Attorney for Applicant

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200